

§ 10.618

time and place of the hearing, including the amount of time allotted for the hearing, considering the issues to be resolved.

(b) Unless otherwise directed in writing by the claimant, the hearing representative will mail a notice of the time and place of the oral hearing to the claimant and any representative at least 30 days before the scheduled date. The employer will also be mailed a notice at least 30 days before the scheduled date.

(c) The hearing is an informal process, and the hearing representative is not bound by common law or statutory rules of evidence, by technical or formal rules of procedure or by section 5 of the Administrative Procedure Act, but the hearing representative may conduct the hearing in such manner as to best ascertain the rights of the claimant. During the hearing process, the claimant may state his or her arguments and present new written evidence in support of the claim.

(d) Testimony at oral hearings is recorded, then transcribed and placed in the record. Oral testimony shall be made under oath.

(e) OWCP will furnish a transcript of the oral hearing to the claimant and the employer, who have 20 days from the date it is sent to comment. Any comments received from the employer shall be sent to the claimant, who will be given an additional 20 days to comment from the date OWCP sends any agency comments.

(f) The hearing remains open for the submittal of additional evidence until 30 days after the hearing is held, unless the hearing representative, in his or her sole discretion, grants an extension. Only one such extension may be granted. A copy of the decision will be mailed to the claimant's last known address, to any representative, and to the employer.

(g) The hearing representative determines the conduct of the oral hearing and may terminate the hearing at any time he or she determines that all relevant evidence has been obtained, or because of misbehavior on the part of the claimant and/or representative at or near the place of the oral presentation.

20 CFR Ch. I (4-1-08 Edition)

§ 10.618 How is a review of the written record conducted?

(a) The hearing representative will review the official record and any additional evidence submitted by the claimant and by the agency. The hearing representative may also conduct whatever investigation is deemed necessary. New evidence and arguments are to be submitted at any time up to the time specified by OWCP, but they should be submitted as soon as possible to avoid delaying the hearing process.

(b) The claimant should submit, with his or her application for review, all evidence or argument that he or she wants to present to the hearing representative. A copy of all pertinent material will be sent to the employer, which will have 20 days from the date it is sent to comment. (Medical evidence is not considered "pertinent" for review and comment by the agency, and it will therefore not be furnished to the agency. OWCP has sole responsibility for evaluating medical evidence.) The employer shall send any comments to the claimant, who will have 20 more days from the date of the agency's certificate of service to comment.

§ 10.619 May subpoenas be issued for witnesses and documents?

A claimant may request a subpoena, but the decision to grant or deny such a request is within the discretion of the hearing representative. The hearing representative may issue subpoenas for the attendance and testimony of witnesses, and for the production of books, records, correspondence, papers or other relevant documents. Subpoenas are issued for documents only if they are relevant and cannot be obtained by other means, and for witnesses only where oral testimony is the best way to ascertain the facts.

(a) A claimant may request a subpoena only as part of the hearings process, and no subpoena will be issued under any other part of the claims process. To request a subpoena, the requestor must:

(1) Submit the request in writing and send it to the hearing representative as early as possible but no later than 60 days (as evidenced by postmark, electronic marker or other objective date

mark) after the date of the original hearing request.

(2) Explain why the testimony or evidence is directly relevant to the issues at hand, and a subpoena is the best method or opportunity to obtain such evidence because there are no other means by which the documents or testimony could have been obtained.

(b) No subpoena will be issued for attendance of employees of OWCP acting in their official capacities as decision-makers or policy administrators. For hearings taking the form of a review of the written record, no subpoena for the appearance of witnesses will be considered.

(c) The hearing representative issues the subpoena under his or her own name. It may be served in person or by certified mail, return receipt requested, addressed to the person to be served at his or her last known principal place of business or residence. A decision to deny a subpoena can only be appealed as part of an appeal of any adverse decision which results from the hearing.

§ 10.620 Who pays the costs associated with subpoenas?

(a) Witnesses who are not employees or former employees of the Federal Government shall be paid the same fees and mileage as paid for like services in the District Court of the United States where the subpoena is returnable, except that expert witnesses shall be paid a fee not to exceed the local customary fee for such services.

(b) Where OWCP asked that the witness submit evidence into the case record or asked that the witness attend, OWCP shall pay the fees and mileage. Where the claimant requested the subpoena, and where the witness submitted evidence into the record at the request of the claimant, the claimant shall pay the fees and mileage.

§ 10.621 What is the employer's role when an oral hearing has been requested?

(a) The employer may send one (or more, where appropriate) representative(s) to observe the proceeding, but the agency representative cannot give testimony or argument or otherwise participate in the hearing, except

where the claimant or the hearing representative specifically asks the agency representative to testify.

(b) The hearing representative may deny a request by the claimant that the agency representative testify where the claimant cannot show that the testimony would be relevant or where the agency representative does not have the appropriate level of knowledge to provide such evidence at the hearing. The employer may also comment on the hearing transcript, as described in § 10.617(e).

§ 10.622 May a claimant withdraw a request for or postpone a hearing?

(a) The claimant and/or representative may withdraw the hearing request at any time up to and including the day the hearing is held, or the decision issued. Withdrawing the hearing request means the record is returned to the jurisdiction of the district office and no further requests for a hearing on the underlying decision will be considered.

(b) OWCP will entertain any reasonable request for scheduling the oral hearing, but such requests should be made at the time of the original application for hearing. Scheduling is at the sole discretion of the hearing representative, and is not reviewable. Once the oral hearing is scheduled and OWCP has mailed appropriate written notice to the claimant, the oral hearing cannot be postponed at the claimant's request for any reason except those stated in paragraph (c) of this section, unless the hearing representative can reschedule the hearing on the same docket (that is, during the same hearing trip). When the request to postpone a scheduled hearing does not meet the test of paragraph (c) of this section and cannot be accommodated on the docket, no further opportunity for an oral hearing will be provided. Instead, the hearing will take the form of a review of the written record and a decision issued accordingly. In the alternative, a teleconference may be substituted for the oral hearing at the discretion of the hearing representative.

(c) Where the claimant is hospitalized for a reason which is not elective, or where the death of the claimant's